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Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

Reporting period from 1 March to 28 June 2013

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since my last report of 27 February 2013 (S/2013/120).

2. In a press statement issued on 14 March, the members of the Security Council welcomed the prevailing stability across the Blue Line and in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and stressed the necessity for all parties to ensure that the freedom of movement of UNIFIL is fully respected and unimpeded. They underscored their concern over repeated incidents of cross-border fire and at the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon's stability. Members of the Council stressed the need for all parties to respect Lebanon's policy of disassociation and to refrain from any involvement in the Syrian crisis, consistent with their commitment in the Baabda Declaration, and in this regard welcomed President Michel Sleiman's efforts to preserve Lebanon's unity and stability. They also acknowledged the important role played by the Lebanese security and armed forces in sustaining national unity and sovereignty and welcomed steps to further develop their capacities. Members of the Council expressed their grave concern at the impact of the growing flow of refugees fleeing violence in the Syrian Arab Republic and commended Lebanon's efforts in hosting and assisting those refugees.

3. Against the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and heightened tensions elsewhere in Lebanon, stability and quiet continued to prevail along the Blue Line and in the UNIFIL area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces continued to uphold the cessation of hostilities and their commitment to resolution 1701 (2006). There was no substantive progress, however, towards the implementation of the respective outstanding obligations of the parties under that resolution.

4. There was an increase in violent incidents across the Lebanese-Syrian border. Since 1 March, and as of 12 June, three Lebanese nationals and one Syrian child were killed by cross-border fire by Syrian army forces and armed members of the opposition, which injured at least six others and caused material damage. There were four air strikes by Syrian Government helicopters over Lebanese territory and

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at least one incursion by land. The Lebanese Armed Forces reported continued smuggling of weapons across the Lebanese-Syrian border. Efforts to release the nine remaining pilgrims abducted in the Syrian Arab Republic on 22 May 2012 continue.

5. The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to serve as a background to events inside Lebanon. An intensification of the battle for the Syrian town of Qusayr on 19 May led to a new, sustained round of violence in Tripoli between the residents of a predominantly Sunni neighbourhood and those of an adjacent Alawite area, resulting in the highest number of casualties yet. On 26 May, following a speech in which Hizbullah acknowledged the movement's role in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic, two rockets struck the mainly Shia southern suburbs of Beirut, causing four casualties.

6. The influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon continues to rise at an alarming rate. As at 14 June, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that over 500,000 Syrian refugees were receiving or had sought United Nations assistance in Lebanon. This compares to 27,000 a year ago.

7. Following the resignation of Prime Minister Najib Mikati and his cabinet on 22 March, President Sleiman, on 6 April, appointed Tammam Salam as Prime Minister designate, with the broad support of political parties. As the parties were unable to agree on a basis for elections in Parliament, the President approved the suspension of the application of the election law on 12 April to enable the parties to continue consultations on proposals for a new draft law until 19 May. In the absence of agreement on a new law, on 31 May Parliament voted to extend its mandate until 20 November 2014, thereby postponing the elections scheduled for June. Prime Minister Mikati and members of his Government remain in office in a caretaker capacity while the Prime Minister designate continues consultations with all parties to form a new Government.

II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Situation in the UNIFIL area of operations

8. The situation in the UNIFIL area of operations remained generally calm during the reporting period. A few instances of heightened tension along the Blue Line were defused successfully through the parties' continued use of UNIFIL liaison and coordination arrangements. The parties also continued to work closely with UNIFIL to further strengthen security arrangements along the Blue Line. Due to ongoing security challenges in other parts of Lebanon, the Lebanese Armed Forces temporarily redeployed additional troops outside the UNIFIL area of operations, while maintaining close cooperation with UNIFIL and periodically reinforcing its presence in the UNIFIL area of operations, as needed. The presence of Syrian refugees in the area south of the Litani River continued to increase, with 16,899 people registered or awaiting registration by UNHCR as of 10 June.

9. Violations of Lebanese airspace by the Israel Defense Forces continued, with almost daily overflights by unmanned aerial vehicles and fixed-wing aircraft, including fighter jets. During the period from 3 to 5 May alone, UNIFIL counted 49 Israeli fighter jets violating Lebanese airspace, and from 27 to 29 May, there were intensified Israeli overflights, mostly by unmanned aerial vehicles. UNIFIL protested

all the air violations to the Israel Defense Forces, calling upon the authorities to cease them immediately. The Government of Lebanon also protested the violations, while the Government of Israel continued claiming that the overflights were necessary security measures.

10. The Israel Defense Forces continued its occupation of the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). As laid out in my previous reports over the last seven years, UNIFIL has sought to facilitate the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the area. A response from Israel is still pending on the most recent UNIFIL proposal, of June 2011, regarding security arrangements for northern Ghajar, to which the Lebanese Armed Forces responded positively in July 2011.

11. In April 2013, the Israel Defense Forces informed UNIFIL of Israel's plans to reinforce the physical security infrastructure around Ghajar, including the northern part, intended, inter alia, to deter alleged smuggling activities from Lebanon. UNIFIL shared the technical details of the planned works with the Lebanese Armed Forces, which rejected it as a serious violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and voiced concern that the work could lead to an escalation of tensions, while expressing its readiness to cooperate with UNIFIL to prevent incidents, including any smuggling activities. UNIFIL conveyed this to the Israel Defense Forces, adding its own concerns regarding any potential escalation along the Blue Line and reiterating the position of the United Nations that the Israel Defense Forces must withdraw from all areas north of the Blue Line. The matter was discussed at the tripartite meeting of 8 May at which the Israel Defense Forces indicated that it would review its plans for the works in northern Ghajar. UNIFIL is following up on the issue with both parties, with a view to preventing tensions and incidents along the Blue Line.

12. UNIFIL completed its investigations into the rocket-launching incidents of 19 and 21 November 2012, as well as the 17 December 2012 explosion in Tayr Harfa, described in my previous report (S/2013/120). UNIFIL shared the results of these investigations with the parties. With regard to the incident of 19 November 2012, the Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that they had discovered and dismantled two 107 millimetre rockets in the area between Mazraat Islamiye and Darjhat (Sector East). While UNIFIL confirmed that the rockets had been found 3.68 kilometres north of the Blue Line, it could not establish when the firing of the rockets had been attempted or why the initiation system had not worked. With regard to the incident of 21 November 2012, when an explosion had been heard in the vicinity of Al Mansurah (north of the Litani River), UNIFIL did not find any impact site in its area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that the launching site was located north of the Litani River, outside the UNIFIL area of operations, and did not approve the Force's request to visit the site on that basis.

13. With regard to the explosion in Tayr Harfa (Sector West) on 17 December, UNIFIL found that eyewitness accounts, the material damage caused and the metallic ordnance fragments collected at the site all pointed to the detonation of a large quantity of explosives. UNIFIL was unable to determine the cause of the explosion definitively, however, as the site had been disturbed before UNIFIL and Lebanese Armed Forces investigation teams could access it, leaving the possibility that evidence had been lost. The UNIFIL request to excavate the explosion site was not accepted by the Lebanese Armed Forces.

14. In accordance with resolution 1701 (2006), it is the primary responsibility of the Lebanese Armed Forces to establish, between the Blue Line and the Litani River, an area free of armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL. In this regard, the discovery and dismantling of rockets by the Lebanese Armed Forces is an important contribution to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), including the maintenance of the cessation of hostilities. At the same time, it is imperative that UNIFIL is afforded full and immediate access to sites of suspected explosions or other incidents and that it is supported in the conduct of its investigations in order to verify if any violation of resolution 1701 (2006) had occurred and to determine the source and nature of any violations and to identify preventive measures for the future.

15. During the reporting period, UNIFIL observed an increase in the number of ground violations of the Blue Line committed by shepherds or farmers, which occurred on an almost daily basis. Most of these violations were inadvertent and occurred mainly in the Shab'a Farms area. UNIFIL protested the violations to the Lebanese Armed Forces and recalled that it is the primary responsibility of Lebanese authorities to ensure full respect for the Blue Line in its entirety.

16. On 1 May, near Ras Naqoura (Sector West), an Israeli civilian crossed the technical fence into Lebanon and was apprehended by a Lebanese Armed Forces patrol. Following questioning by the Lebanese Armed Forces, the man was voluntarily repatriated to Israel on 5 May under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, with the support of UNIFIL. In a separate incident, on 6 April, UNIFIL observed one Israeli civilian, who had climbed the T-wall along the Blue Line in Kafr Kela (Sector East), shouting at Lebanese Armed Forces personnel and civilians on the other side. UNIFIL protested the incident to the Israel Defense Forces.

17. Due to multiple security responsibilities elsewhere in Lebanon, in March the Lebanese Armed Forces temporarily redeployed additional troops from the UNIFIL area of operations to the vicinities of Sidon and Nabatiyeh, just north of the Litani River. This brought the total strength of the Lebanese Armed Forces presence in the UNIFIL area of operations to approximately two brigades, which were reorganized along the general operational boundaries of UNIFIL's two sectors. The Lebanese Armed Forces Command reassured UNIFIL that it would return units of the Lebanese Armed Forces to the UNIFIL area of operations should the security situation warrant. In line with that commitment, the Lebanese Armed Forces temporarily reinforced its presence by quickly deploying two companies to the area in advance of and during the Palestinian commemoration day on 15 May.

18. Despite the decreased physical presence of the Lebanese Armed Forces in the UNIFIL area of operations, both Forces continued their daily coordinated operational activities, co-locating checkpoints, including seven along the Litani River, and coordinating patrolling and joint training exercises. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued to carry out joint counter-rocket launching operations, which were increased in the aftermath of the reported air strikes in the Syrian Arab Republic on 3 and 5 May and the firing of rockets in south Beirut on 26 May, as well as during the Palestinian commemorations on 30 March, 15 May and 5 June. The Lebanese Armed Forces established a permanent observation post near the Wazzani River to prevent violations of the Blue Line that have been prevalent in the past, particularly during the tourist season. UNIFIL continued to carry out regular helicopter patrols in its area of operations.

19. UNIFIL generally enjoyed full freedom of movement throughout its area of operations. However, on several occasions during the reporting period, UNIFIL encountered situations wherein civilians displayed antagonistic or aggressive behaviour and impeded the freedom of movement of UNIFIL personnel. On 8 March, in Ghassaniyah, outside the UNIFIL area of operations, two UNIFIL vehicles travelling from Sidon to United Nations position 7-1 (Sector East) were stopped by civilians who forcibly seized UNIFIL equipment and personal belongings, including electronic and data storage devices. The stolen items are still missing. On another occasion, on 24 March near Yatar (Sector West), a group of civilians stopped a UNIFIL patrol asking it to leave the area and to return only if accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces. The civilians broke into the UNIFIL vehicles and seized electronic military and personal equipment, which has not yet been returned. Most recently, on 5 May, near Tibnin (Sector West), a UNIFIL patrol was stopped by four civilians who blocked the road with their motorcycles and objected to the patrol's presence in the area without the accompaniment of the Lebanese Armed Forces. When one civilian tried to force open the door of a UNIFIL patrol vehicle, the patrol forced its way through the roadblock and left the area. UNIFIL protested the incidents to the Lebanese Armed Forces, requesting that they be investigated and the illegally seized items recovered.

20. In addition, there have been instances when UNIFIL patrols, including some conducted along with the Lebanese Armed Forces, were prevented from proceeding by individuals either claiming to be acting on behalf of municipal authorities or stating that the road was private property. These incidents occurred in the Sector West area near Bmaryamir, Rshaf, Majda Zun and Tayr Harfa. UNIFIL protested all the incidents to the Lebanese Armed Forces, which subsequently informed UNIFIL that the concerned areas were indeed private property. In addition, there were two incidents near Ramyah (Sector West) in which individuals made forcible attempts to remove temporary road closures established by UNIFIL demining teams as a safety measure during its demining activities. There were several stone-throwing incidents against UNIFIL patrols, which, in two cases, caused minor damage to UNIFIL vehicles.

21. These incidents notwithstanding, the relations between the local population and UNIFIL remained positive. Through its regular liaison activities with local communities, UNIFIL sought to build confidence with the population within its area of operations. For example, at the Wazzani plateau, UNIFIL addressed local community concerns about the damage caused to fields along paths used by heavy military vehicles. UNIFIL continued to provide a range of community services, including medical, dental, veterinary and educational assistance. During the period, UNIFIL also completed several quick-impact projects and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs, aimed at strengthening cooperation to build local capacity and social development, with a special focus on youth and women. In this regard, UNIFIL introduced on-the-job training for students and teachers and coordinated with a wide range of civilian actors in planning and organizing joint outreach activities.

22. UNIFIL continued to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces in taking steps towards the establishment, between the Blue Line and the Litani River, of an area free of any unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons. Israeli authorities repeated their claims that Hizbullah had been building up its military presence inside populated areas in southern Lebanon and that unauthorized weapons were being transferred

into the UNIFIL area of operations. In coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL remains determined to act with all means available, within its mandate and the rules of engagement, to address cases where specific information is received regarding the illegal presence of armed personnel or weapons within its area of operations. UNIFIL does not, however, proactively search for weapons in the south. UNIFIL is not authorized to enter private property unless it possesses credible evidence of a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), including an imminent threat of hostile activity emanating from that specific location. To date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with, nor has found, evidence of the unauthorized transfer of arms into its area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces command continued to state that it would act immediately to stop any illegal activity in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Government decisions.

23. During the reporting period, aside from hunting weapons, UNIFIL observed no unauthorized armed personnel or weapons inside its area of operations. However, UNIFIL noted an increase in the number of individuals carrying hunting weapons in its area of operations, as compared to the previous period. Most such instances were observed in the areas of Blida and Meiss Ej Jebel (Sector East). The largest group included 27 individuals carrying 24 hunting rifles and a carbine on 7 April in the vicinity of Blida. In each instance, UNIFIL informed the Lebanese Armed Forces.

24. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continued to carry out its dual mandate of conducting maritime interdiction operations in the area of maritime operations and training Lebanese navy personnel. Since my previous report, as of 17 June, the Lebanese navy and customs officials had inspected 391 vessels in order to verify that there were no unauthorized arms or related materiel on board. The Maritime Task Force and Lebanese naval forces conducted 42 training exercises on land and 151 at sea. Lebanese navy personnel continued to develop their capabilities through the conduct of nine on-the-job training exercises in maritime interdiction operations. There were some operational limitations to combined activities owing to the lack of adequate Lebanese navy vessels.

25. There were a number of incidents along the line of buoys. UNIFIL observed Israeli navy units dropping 16 depth charges and firing three flares, in addition to warning shots on 11 occasions, along the line of buoys, reportedly to ward off Lebanese fishing boats in the vicinity. UNIFIL has no mandate to monitor the buoy line, which the Government of Israel installed unilaterally and which the Government of Lebanon does not recognize.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

26. UNIFIL continued to carry out its liaison and coordination with both parties in a positive and constructive atmosphere and along the lines set out in my previous reports. The parties repeatedly demonstrated their readiness to engage in UNIFIL efforts to address points of contention and decrease tensions. Daily interaction and liaison activities between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued at their established high and effective level. UNIFIL also maintained effective liaison and coordination with the Israel Defense Forces. No progress was made towards the establishment of a UNIFIL office in Tel Aviv.

27. The tripartite forum continued to convene regularly with full and active participation of the parties, effectively addressing emerging operational issues

relevant to maintaining the cessation of hostilities. The forum remains the most significant stabilizing factor within the framework of resolution 1701 (2006), serving to build confidence between the parties and defuse tension in potential flashpoints, as well as providing a platform through which UNIFIL can facilitate practical arrangements on the ground between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces. For example, a tripartite meeting on 8 May addressed the issue of Israel's planned works to reinforce the security infrastructure around Ghajar, with a view to averting any escalation of tensions. Other issues addressed in tripartite discussions included violations of resolution 1701 (2006), including of the Blue Line and Lebanese airspace, the results of UNIFIL investigations into incidents and restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNIFIL personnel in its area of operations.

28. Progress in the visible marking of the Blue Line continued. During the reporting period, the Israel Defense Forces proposed new Blue Line points in addition to those originally listed for the marking of the Blue Line in its entirety. The Lebanese Armed Forces agreed to 49 of these new points proposed for marking. Hence, since my last report, the parties have agreed to mark a total of 54 additional points. As at 13 June, out of the new total of 522 Blue Line points to be marked, the parties have agreed to mark 302. The Force's demining teams have cleared access to 245 points to date, 207 of which have been measured. Some 184 Blue Line markers have been constructed and 156 verified by both parties. UNIFIL also continued separate discussions with the parties on addressing the issue of the points deemed problematic or contentious by the parties.

29. As mentioned in my previous reports, UNIFIL engaged with the Israel Defense Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces in bilateral consultations, upon their request, to explore ways to address questions of maritime security between the two countries. Informal consultations were held on this basis and, while a gap between their respective positions remains, both parties displayed a positive approach and interest in achieving progress on the issue of maritime security. UNIFIL is ready to facilitate further discussion and implement possible arrangements as may be agreed by the parties.

30. The efforts of the Force to increase the capability of the Lebanese Armed Forces through the strategic dialogue continued. Further to the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL's finalization of a plan for the development of the Lebanese Armed Forces in the UNIFIL area of operations in February 2013, UNIFIL briefed representatives of troop-contributing countries and other Member States to promote the plan. The strategic dialogue is a separate but integral component of the Lebanese Armed Forces capabilities development plan. UNIFIL also continued to explore with the Lebanese Armed Forces the establishment of a coordination mechanism for donor support to the strategic dialogue plan.

C. Disarming armed groups

31. Resolution 1701 (2006) calls for the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, as well as of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon.

32. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups outside the control of the Lebanese State, in violation of resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006), continues to restrict the State's ability to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory. Hizbullah acknowledges publicly that since 2006 it has continued to maintain a substantial military capacity separate from that of the Lebanese State, which it claims serves as a deterrent against potential aggression from Israel. While no meetings of the National Dialogue were held during the reporting period, President Sleiman has publicly restated support for the approach with regard to national defence and the control and use of Hizbullah's arms contained in the national defence strategy paper he presented as a basis for discussion in the National Dialogue in September 2012.

33. The proliferation of arms outside the control of the State continues to threaten stability. In Tripoli there were six fatalities as a result of a new cycle of violence between the residents of the predominantly Sunni neighbourhood of Bab al-Tabbaneh and the neighbouring Alawite area of Jebel Mohsen in March. A further sustained period of fighting, which began on 19 May, caused at least 36 fatalities, including two members of the Lebanese Armed Forces deployed to contain the violence, and injured over 200 people, including army personnel. Despite a pause in the fighting, other incidents of shooting and grenade throwing in the city caused a further four deaths and injured others. On 28 May, three soldiers were killed in an attack on a checkpoint in the Beqa'a town of Arsal by unknown gunmen. On 3 June, a Sunni sheikh survived an assassination attempt in Sidon. On 23 and 24 June, armed clashes in Sidon between supporters of a Salafi cleric and the Lebanese Armed Forces left at least 16 soldiers dead and over 50 others wounded. I condemned this and other attacks on the Lebanese Armed Forces.

34. There has been no progress on the dismantling of military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and Fatah al-Intifada. In 2006, it was decided in the National Dialogue that these bases should be dismantled. The existence of these bases continues to compromise Lebanese sovereignty and impede the ability of the State to monitor and control effectively parts of the Lebanese-Syrian border.

35. During the reporting period, there was a noticeable increase in tension and in the number of security incidents in the Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon. Clashes broke out in Ein el Hilweh on at least three occasions between members of the Jund el Sham and Fatah factions, leaving four persons dead and injuring at least 20 others. At least two of the soldiers killed in the context of the violence in Sidon on 23 June were attacked at checkpoints of the Lebanese Armed Forces at the entrances to Ein el Hilweh.

D. Arms embargo and border control

36. In its resolution 1701 (2006), the Security Council decided that all States should prevent the sale or the supply of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon by their nationals, or from their territories, or using their flag vessels or aircraft. In the same resolution the Council also called upon the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points so as to prevent the entry of arms and related materiel into Lebanon without its consent.

37. Israeli Government representatives have consistently alleged that there are significant, ongoing arms transfers to Hizbullah across the Lebanese-Syrian border. The United Nations takes these allegations seriously, but it is not in a position to independently verify them. Senior Israeli officials stated publicly during the reporting period that Israel would take steps to prevent the transfer of advanced weapons from the Syrian Arab Republic to Hizbullah. In a letter dated 5 May (A/67/859-S/2013/266), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon protested intensifying incursions by the Israeli air force over Lebanon in violation of Lebanese airspace, coinciding with reported air strikes on targets in Damascus on 3 and 5 May. In a letter of the same date in connection with the reported air strikes (S/2013/267), the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic denied any movement of weapons out of Syrian territory. While the United Nations has no details concerning the event, and is not in a position to independently verify it, I noted the reports with grave concern and urged all sides to exercise maximum calm and restraint, to act with a sense of responsibility to prevent an escalation and to respect the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries in the region and adhere to all relevant Security Council resolutions. On 9 May, Hizbullah asserted that it was willing to receive new weapons from the Syrian Arab Republic.

38. There was an increase in incidents of cross-border shelling and rocket fire from the Syrian Arab Republic into Lebanon during the reporting period. As at 12 June, projectiles fired by Syrian army forces and by armed members of the opposition from within the Syrian Arab Republic into Lebanese territory killed at least three Lebanese citizens and injured at least six others. Other Lebanese casualties have been reported. Syrian army fighter jets and helicopters were involved in at least six reported violations of Lebanese airspace. Syrian army helicopters fired missiles at the Lebanese town of Arsal on five occasions, causing at least one casualty and material damage. On 19 June, President Sleiman protested these violations in a letter for transmission to the President of the Security Council (S/2013/370, annex). The Lebanese Armed Forces stated that their units in that area had taken the defensive measures necessary to react immediately to any further violation. On 2 May, Syrian army forces reportedly entered the Lebanese village of Ras Baalbek causing some material damage. On 23 May, members of the Lebanese security forces came under fire from within the Syrian Arab Republic. President Sleiman convened a meeting of the security cabinet on 14 April to address the continued cross-border attacks and to seek support from the League of Arab States. President Sleiman issued repeated calls on the parties in the Syrian Arab Republic to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and avoid military acts against Lebanese border areas.

39. In public statements, elements in Lebanon have become more open about involvement in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic. On 25 May, Hizbullah acknowledged and defended the movement's engagement in the Syrian military confrontation. There were frequent media reports of funerals of members of Hizbullah killed in the fighting in and around the Syrian town of Qusayr. On 22 April, two prominent Salafi sheikhs urged followers to engage in jihad in the Syrian Arab Republic and credible reports indicate that Lebanese Sunni elements are involved in the fighting there alongside the armed opposition. President Sleiman has repeatedly voiced concern about Lebanese involvement in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, calling on all Lebanese to abide by the policy of disassociation and the principles of the Baabda Declaration, to which Lebanon's leaders agreed in June 2012. In an interview published on 20 June in the Lebanese media, President Sleiman

called on Hizbullah fighters to return to Lebanon. On 26 May, I expressed deep concern about the acknowledged increased participation by Hizbullah in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic and reiterated to all Lebanese leaders the paramount importance of preventing a dangerous spillover of the conflict into Lebanon.

40. The Lebanese Armed Forces continued their efforts to sustain and extend the authority of the State along Lebanon's northern and eastern borders, including by checking smuggling of weapons and inhibiting the movement of fighters. My Special Coordinator convened a meeting of Ambassadors from donor countries on 25 April as part of the long-standing effort to coordinate assistance to the Lebanese security forces with border management. My Special Coordinator also continued to work with donors and the Lebanese Armed Forces to finalize and mobilize support for the $1.6 billion plan to develop the capacity and capability of the Lebanese Armed Forces, for which the Government has committed itself to cover funding over the first year. On 15 May, the Lebanese Armed Forces hosted a preparatory meeting for the launch of the plan, which was shared with donor countries.

41. The influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon has reached a dramatic level. As of 14 June, half a million Syrians had approached UNHCR, 80 per cent of whom were women and children. It is projected that the number of those seeking assistance will reach 1 million by the end of 2013. The assistance effort continues to grow, although UNHCR and its partners have had to reduce levels of assistance for a certain period because of a shortage of funds and the rapidly rising numbers. The regional response plan for the previous six months has been 88 per cent funded. The new regional response plan, launched on 7 June, requires over $1.6 billion to address refugee needs in Lebanon for the next six-month period, including a request for $450 million from the Lebanese Government for its own response. Host communities increasingly complain of the pressure on local resources and Lebanese officials express concern as to possible economic, health and security implications. Nonetheless, Lebanon continued to meet its humanitarian obligations to host those seeking refuge. President Sleiman has described even the current burden as unsustainable and called for an international conference on the refugee issue.

42. Increasing tension was observed within Palestinian refugee camps as a result of security incidents (although they have been successfully contained), overcrowding, competition for employment, rising prices and other factors resulting from the increasing number of refugees displaced from the Syrian Arab Republic. The total number of Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic who have approached the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Lebanon is now 61,500. This figure is projected to reach 80,000 by the end of 2013.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

43. The Lebanon Mine Action Centre, a unit of the Lebanese Armed Forces, is the national authority for mine action in Lebanon with responsibility for the management of all humanitarian clearance and mine action data. The United Nations Mine Action Support Team is a programme of the United Nations Mine Action Service implemented in support of UNIFIL demining activities along the Blue Line through the execution of training, validation and quality assurance monitoring for UNIFIL contingents.

44. Eight manual mine-clearance teams, three military explosives ordnance disposal teams and one mechanical clearance team from UNIFIL are currently validated and deployed in the area of operations. From 1 March to 16 June, UNIFIL cleared over 4,750 m^2 of hazardous land to provide access to Blue Line points. In addition, UNIFIL found and destroyed 177 anti-personnel mines. The United Nations Mine Action Service conducted training for UNIFIL military and civilian personnel and quality assurance visits to operational sites and organized demonstrations. On the occasion of Mine Awareness Day, on 4 April, UNIFIL and the United Nations Mine Action Service organized events for visitors, including 74 students from local schools, to highlight the global problem of landmines and explosive remnants of war, and the United Nations response.

F. Delineation of border

45. No progress was made towards delineating and demarcating the Syrian-Lebanese border, including in areas where it is uncertain or disputed, as called for in Security Council resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). Cross-border violence, incursions and air strikes in border areas as a result of the Syrian conflict once again highlights the importance of the delineation and demarcation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic as soon as practicable.

46. There has also been no progress on the issue of the Shab'a Farms area. There has still been no reaction to the provisional definition of that area contained in my report of 30 October 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641) from either Israel or the Syrian Arab Republic.

III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

47. UNIFIL continued to cooperate closely with the Lebanese authorities to ensure the safety and security of all Force personnel, in addition to applying its own risk mitigation measures, continuously reviewing its security plans and carrying out safety awareness training for its personnel.

48. UNIFIL continued to observe proceedings in the Lebanese Military Court against suspects involved in cases of serious attacks, actual or planned, against UNIFIL peacekeepers, the latest of which took place in 2011. Permanent court hearings concerning the case of an intended attack against UNIFIL in 2011 and an attack against UNIFIL in 2008 were adjourned to June and September 2013, respectively, in order to call for additional witnesses. There were no developments in the appeal court hearings concerning sentences handed down in October 2012 in the case of another intended attack against UNIFIL in 2008.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

49. As at 17 June, the total military strength of UNIFIL was 10,681, including 377 (3.5 per cent) women. The civilian component consisted of 332 international and 649 national staff, including 98 and 164 women, respectively. UNIFIL is

supported by 51 United Nations Truce Supervision Organization military observers of the Observer Group Lebanon, including three women.

50. Further to my previous report, Spain completed its planned reduction in the number of its troops in the Force to 558 in May. On 3 April 2013, Indonesia deployed a new corvette as part of the Maritime Task Force, which brought the Task Force's strength back to the required level of eight ships (two frigates, three corvettes and three fast patrol boats) and two helicopters.

V. Observations

51. Amid the ongoing crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and the increasing volatility in some parts of Lebanon, the continued quiet along the Blue Line and stability in the UNIFIL area of operations are noteworthy. I commend both parties for demonstrating strong commitment to safeguarding the cessation of hostilities and for keeping a steady focus on maintaining calm through their continued cooperation with UNIFIL and their effective use of the liaison and coordination arrangements.

52. I remain concerned at the lack of progress towards achieving a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution to the conflict, as envisaged in resolution 1701 (2006). I continue to believe that it is in the mutual interests of the parties to work towards achieving those objectives. My Special Coordinator and UNIFIL have encouraged the parties to focus again on the goal of a permanent ceasefire, and in this regard I once again take this opportunity to urge both parties to reflect positively on ways forward. I further urge all concerned to avoid escalatory steps that could endanger the present calm and to make the fullest use of the liaison and coordination arrangements existing with UNIFIL, and the good offices of my Special Coordinator, to address developments of concern.

53. Major obligations under the resolution remain outstanding and require action by both parties. The imperative remains for continued efforts to ensure that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River is free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL. The Lebanese authorities have the primary responsibility in this regard. In this context, I also wish to reiterate the need to ensure that both parties cooperate fully with UNIFIL investigations into possible violations of resolution 1701 (2006).

54. I am concerned that violations of Lebanese airspace by Israel continue unabated, and in some instances have intensified, in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and resolution 1701 (2006). These almost daily overflights run counter to the Force's objectives and its efforts to reduce tensions, and have a negative impact on the credibility of both the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL. I call again on the Government of Israel to cease all overflights of Lebanese territory and territorial waters.

55. The continued occupation by the Israel Defense Forces of the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line also constitutes a continuing violation of resolution 1701 (2006). I urge the Government of Israel to withdraw its forces from the area, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006), without further delay. UNIFIL stands ready to facilitate such a withdrawal.

56. I am encouraged by the continued progress in visibly marking the Blue Line, which contributes to preventing further inadvertent ground violations. The

commitment of the parties to continue working with UNIFIL, including on contentious or problematic points, will be vital to the completion of this process. I also recall the need for both parties to prevent violations of the Blue Line, and to refrain from taking any measures close to the Blue Line that could lead to misunderstandings or be perceived by the other side as provocative. Both sides, notwithstanding their respective reservations, have undertaken to respect the Blue Line, as identified by the United Nations, in its entirety.

57. There continue to be incidents impeding UNIFIL's freedom of movement as well as instances of aggressive behaviour towards UNIFIL personnel. Although marginal in number compared to the overall level of UNIFIL's activities, some of these incidents have the potential to compromise UNIFIL's effectiveness in executing its tasks under resolution 1701 (2006). It is the primary responsibility of the Lebanese authorities to ensure that UNIFIL can operate unhindered in its area of operations.

58. The impact of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on the security and stability of Lebanon is more and more apparent. The security tensions, political uncertainty and humanitarian concerns are increasingly interrelated. I am deeply concerned by the marked increase during the reporting period in incidents across the Lebanese-Syrian borders, and by the additional fatalities, injuries and material damage caused. Further lack of progress in delineating and demarcating the border is no justification for such serious violations of Lebanese territorial integrity. I deplore these incidents and I call upon the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and all of those fighting in that country to cease violations of the border and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006).

59. I note also with deep concern, new developments with regard to the involvement of Lebanese citizens in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic, including Hizbullah's acknowledged participation in and commitment to such fighting, threats by external actors to bring their fight to Lebanon in response to Hizbullah's involvement and calls from inside Lebanon to engage in jihad in the Syrian Arab Republic. The implications of these developments for Lebanon's stability, and indeed for the region, are serious. I have consistently opposed the transfer of arms and fighters from outside the Syrian Arab Republic to either side inside the country. I urge all concerned parties in Lebanon to step back from involvement in the conflict. The Baabda Declaration, which was agreed upon by all of the country's political leaders last year under the leadership of President Sleiman, sets out principles with regard to neutrality and disassociation, which are of enduring importance in this regard, and I call upon Lebanon's leaders to recommit themselves to them. I commend President Sleiman's continued strong stance in this regard.

60. The unacceptable violence in parts of Lebanon, particularly in Tripoli, during the reporting period highlights the need for renewed unity and determination across the political spectrum to prevent a slide into conflict. Continued broad political support is needed for the security and judicial authorities to combat impunity in respect of acts of violence. The intensity of the violence in Tripoli during this reporting period also underscores the dangerous prevalence of weapons outside the authority of the State. In this regard, I call on all Member States to uphold their obligation, under resolution 1701 (2006), to prevent the sale or supply of arms or related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon.

61. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups outside the control of the State continues to pose a threat to Lebanese sovereignty and stability, and contradicts the country's obligations under resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). President Sleiman's reiteration of the vision set out in his proposed national defence strategy with regard to the arms of Hizbullah was an important reminder of the way forward, which, I remain convinced, can only be through the National Dialogue. I urge Lebanon's leaders to again consider recourse to the dialogue forum to address this and other critical issues relating to the country's stability and security. Such a resumption of dialogue would be an effective demonstration of continued national unity in the face of multiple security challenges. In this context, I also reiterate my call for the implementation of earlier decisions of the National Dialogue, specifically those relating to the disarmament of the non-Lebanese groups and the dismantling of the military bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and Fatah al-Intifada.

62. When they voted on 31 May to extend the Parliament's mandate, members of the Lebanese Parliament cited the tense security situation. It is regrettable that agreement on a new election law did not prove possible. It is imperative for confidence and stability in Lebanon, and for sustaining the long-standing national democratic tradition central to it, that the political parties resume efforts as soon as possible to agree on arrangements for parliamentary elections. A revived sense of urgency and commitment will be needed. The United Nations will continue to do all it can to assist with preparations for elections, including through technical and other support. I am also concerned by any attempts to undermine or boycott Lebanese national institutions at a time when the Lebanese State needs to be strengthened, not weakened.

63. It is self-evident that, to address the multiple challenges it faces, Lebanon requires an effective Government. The initial unanimity among political parties with regard to the selection of Prime Minister designate Tammam Salam sent a very positive signal to the people of Lebanon and to the international community. I encourage Lebanon's leaders to continue to engage with him to finalize the formation of a Government without further delay. In the meantime, it is important that the President and his caretaker Ministers are supported as they seek to address the most pressing issues arising, particularly with regard to security and humanitarian matters.

64. One context in which the early formation of a Government is critical is the humanitarian crisis. Lebanon and its people deserve the highest praise for the way in which they have maintained an open door to those fleeing the violence in the Syrian Arab Republic over the past two years. The numbers continue to rise steadily, with economic, social and security implications that require ongoing Government attention, including planning and decisions involving a multiplicity of agencies. I encourage the Lebanese authorities to ensure that fully empowered institutional structures are in place to carry out the effective planning, delivery and coordination responsibilities. With regard to assistance, although international donors have thus far been generous in response to the United Nations appeals for Lebanon, there is now a need for assistance on an unprecedented scale, both to meet the needs of the refugees and of host communities, and to assist the Lebanese authorities who face extraordinary fiscal and structural challenges as a result of the refugee influx. United Nations and Government officials have worked closely together on the appeal for Lebanon contained in the new regional response plan launched on 7 June. I thank those in the international community who have helped in bringing this about.

I call upon all Governments and funds which are able to provide assistance in response to the revised appeal to do so generously and without delay, and I look particularly to regional donors to assist where possible. Lebanon faces a truly massive challenge and the Lebanese people, and the refugees, deserve every possible support. I encourage the international community to consider President Sleiman's proposal for a conference on the Syrian refugees in Lebanon to address the urgent support needed to alleviate the pressures of the crisis for Lebanon.

65. I commend the Lebanese Armed Forces for its steadfast commitment and cooperation with UNIFIL, especially during the periods of heightened tensions and given its multiple security responsibilities. The Lebanese Armed Forces, in partnership with UNIFIL, plays a key role in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Building the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces is essential. Supporting the development of the capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces, on land and at sea, is a prerequisite for its gradual assumption of effective and sustainable security control of the UNIFIL area of operations and Lebanese territorial waters, and a key element to support moves towards a permanent ceasefire. In this context, I welcome the progress made in the process of formalization of a regular strategic dialogue mechanism between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL. I am grateful to those countries that are helping to equip and train the Lebanese Armed Forces, including the navy.

66. Throughout the present report, as in previous ones, reference also has been made to the crucial role played by the Lebanese Armed Forces in responding to new security challenges, whether on Lebanon's eastern and northern borders or internally, which threaten stability as a central concern of the resolution. Over the present reporting period the Lebanese Armed Forces have had to respond to further testing challenges. It is vital that Lebanon's leaders across the political spectrum and Lebanese in all communities continue to offer every possible support to the Lebanese Armed Forces as a truly national institution which is a central pillar of the country's stability.

67. The international community can play its part, alongside the Government of Lebanon, in helping to strengthen the capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces, which are increasingly stretched. I congratulate the Armed Forces for the work that went into its wider capabilities development plan, of which the Strategic Dialogue plan forms a separate but integral component. The development plan has been endorsed by the authorities in Lebanon at the highest level, and the Government has committed funds to it. It has now been shared with those Member States that have assisted the Lebanese Armed Forces. I urge the international community to increase its support to the strengthening of the Lebanese Armed Forces and to provide further assistance in response to the new plan, either directly or via the mechanism of the Strategic Dialogue, as appropriate. The United Nations will continue to offer every possible support for these important initiatives in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces and donors.

68. It is important that leaders in the Palestinian camps continue to work together and with the Lebanese authorities to maintain order. The need to improve the living conditions of Palestine refugees in Lebanon, without prejudice to the resolution of the refugee question and the context of a comprehensive peace settlement, is ever more urgent as the Palestine refugee camps are increasingly overcrowded as a result of the growing numbers of Palestine refugees displaced from the Syrian Arab Republic.

I encourage donors to be forthcoming in support of UNRWA, including to enable it to effectively assist displaced Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic.

69. Regrettably no progress has been made with regard to the Shab'a Farms area, in accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006). I call, once again, on the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel to submit their responses to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area that I provided in my report of 30 October 2007 (S/2007/641).

70. Oil and gas exploration opportunities in the eastern Mediterranean remained significant interests of both Lebanon and Israel during the reporting period. The launch on 2 May of the offshore oil and gas concession period by Lebanon was a significant step towards the country's eventual ability to reap the benefits of its natural resources. In this context, I encourage both countries to continue efforts to address the delimitation of their respective maritime exclusive economic zones and the exploration and exploitation of their natural resources in a manner that does not give rise to tensions. The United Nations remains ready to assist in this matter should both parties so request.

71. Lebanon's resilience in the face of the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic has been severely tested over the four months covered in the present report. In the circumstances of increased tensions described herein, keeping Lebanon safe from conflict and sustaining the present fragile calm across the Blue Line are in themselves demanding objectives. If they are to be met, the united support of the international community will be required. For the sake of regional and international peace and security it is vital that this unity be sustained in the coming period, that appropriate attention and support be devoted to addressing the challenges identified in this report and that the Governments of Lebanon and Israel and all other stakeholders remain committed to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) during this period of uncertainty. Longer-term security and stability call for an end to conflict in the region, including progress towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

72. I am grateful to all countries contributing troops and equipment to UNIFIL. I also wish to express my appreciation to the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander and the civilian and military peacekeeping personnel, in addition to the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the staff of his office, all of whom continue to play a vital role in helping to promote stability along the Blue Line and in Lebanon.